

May 6th

A talk by

David Grierson

About his

Asian Adventures



An illustrated travelogue focusing on China where I lived for seven years together with some (generally) light hearted reminiscences of many of the other countries I have visited including North Korea, Laos, Bhutan and, most recently, Japan David was, for many years, Head of Music and Drama at Shaftesbury School as well as being a part-time OFSTED inspector. He is well known as an accompanist, conductor, musical director and occasional speaker; his exploits whilst working in China, where he taught in both international and Chinese schools, were serialised in the Blackmore Vale Magazine, winning him an enthusiastic following. David founded and leads the Shaftesbury Community Choir and is a member of the Phoenix Café Orchestra and the sax ensemble Saxophony.

The talk will commence at 3pm. Doors open at 2.15pm for tea, cake and chat.



GARDEN DRAMA



"Oh to be in England now that April's there" and what an April for all us gardeners, but when did you last look at your garden and think that it needed a lift, something exciting, a talking point?

We are very lucky to be able to buy gorgeous garden pots and artefacts, which add drama to any garden; this Cornucopia from Haddonstone of Northampton, is just one example from their extensive range – mount it on a plinth (easy to make) for maximum impact.

Or perhaps a Gothic Pot, again sourced from Haddonstone, and positioned on a plinth - I just could not resist it. But for the full theatrical effect you need to go BIG, and you can go surprisingly big even in a small garden and this bust of Diomedes is BIG and is a real talking point and was sourced from Artichoke of Sherborne, who have lots of garden goodies in stock at present.



So go on, spoil yourself and give your garden what it deserves, you won't regret it.

Happy gardening,
Nick Langrishe.



A VIEW TO A THRILL

Anyone who knows me will tell you I am a bit of a thrill seeker, avidly pursuing activities that give me that rush of adrenaline. This year I had the biggest rush of my life – a tandem sky dive! Because of my health problems my wife found a reputable company who were known to be able to provide a sky diving experience for people with virtually any disability you could think of.

On the day of the jump, I drove to Old Sarum airfield with my wife Alison. I was greeted at reception, and had to sign in, provide medical information, and be weighed. If you weigh over 15st, a 'muscle tax' is applied, to compensate for the extra fuel needed for the flight.

The next step was to watch an orientation video. This showed what would happen on the jump, some handy hints and tips (such as making sure anything loose is removed or well secured) and safety procedures.

The safety procedures were expanded on at the next stage, where I, with a group of other people, was put in my jump suit, and strapped into a harness. The instructor told us which positions we would need to be in at various stages of the jump, and assured us that even if the instructor we were strapped to had a nasty turn



Image courtesy of GoSkyDive)

and became unconscious, the parachute would deploy at a set altitude automatically. The harness was hooked onto a support so we could all practice the various positions a few feet off the ground. Then all I had to do was wait for my turn

My name was called and a strong looking chap called Chris introduced himself to me and said he would be my instructor. He went through the process again and made (sure I didn't have any questions. I said I wanted to see Old Sarum Castle and for him to

scare me! I would regret that later.

The plane was a Cessna Super Cargomaster and once on board, Chris attached my harness to his and we were ready for lift off. The plane climbed over Salisbury and the surrounding countryside, and I could see as far as Stonehenge

and the Severn Estuary. Soon we were at the jump altitude of 15,000 and before I knew it, it was my turn to shuffle to the door of the plane.

Chris did one final check of the straps, and we perched on the edge of the aircraft. My bottom was barely in the plane, with my legs dangling and nothing below. I must admit at this point I wondered if I was mad, and what was I doing, but I wasn't backing out now. I put my head back against Chris' chest and next thing I knew we were out the door and rapidly accelerating to 125 mph. The wind contorted my face, and I was glad I had special covering to keep my glasses on.



Steve Shilling

Chris kept up a running commentary, showing me Old Sarum and other things of interest (which I sadly can't remember now) and as we started to approach the ground he started to swing us round in huge arcs. We got faster and faster until he had to stop so we could land safely. When I was unhooked from Chris and stood up, I realised I was quite giddy from the spinning, and wished I hadn't been so gung-ho initially.

I had the thrill of my life, and would say to you, give it a go.



GARDEN VISITS



We had a very well attended Garden Group trip back in March to the impressive Compton Acres gardens, which was a bit further afield near Poole. There were fifteen of us on this trip of which twelve had a private tour of the gardens by the Head Gardener. We all re-convened for a delicious lunch in the award-winning café. We also visited their nice gift and farm shops. We all thoroughly enjoyed our visit and the sun finally came out!

Our next trip will be at the end of April to The Old Rectory in Litton Cheney, which is near Dorchester. There are currently sixteen members signed up for this, but I'm still waiting to hear back from two or three more. We are just going for an afternoon trip here, as they only serve tea and cake, not lunch!

Our monthly coffee mornings (at Dikes, Stalbridge) are still very well attended and it's proving to be a good location for everyone. The next one will be slightly later

in May (due to the bank holiday), on Mon 12th May, when we will be discussing the next trip later in May, to an NGS garden in the Shaftesbury area.

Janice Nast

WALKING GROUPS

We have two walking groups: one walks on the third Wednesday of the month and the other on the last Tuesday. The groups normally do the same walk each month.

In March, the walk started outside the Church in Child Okeford. There were thirteen on the Wednesday walk and only four on the Tuesday group. The weather was good for the time of year; no rain, no wind and some sunshine. We set off walking through the church yard, over a stile built into an old wall and along a track to the bottom of the path leading up Hambledon Hill. Up we went, heading eastwards, the lower part being partly in shade, but the rest being in full sun. We continued up to the trig point at the top of the hill, then continued on down the hill towards Shroton, around the end of the hill and back up again on a different route. It was hard work, but we were rewarded by beautiful 360-degree views. Over the top for a second time and ahead to go round the Iron Age defences and so descend on the eastern side of the hill, round the end and down along a track which was shaded and had lots of tree roots in the path down to the road back to Child Okeford. Finally, we drove over to the Fiddleford Inn for lunch.



The photo shows some members of the Tuesday group at the top of Hambledon Hill.

The April walk was a fairly easy walk with the intention of seeing some bluebells. The start point was the Fiddleford Inn. The walk started by crossing the A357 and heading up the hill towards Piddles Wood. Instead of going into the wood, the route turned left heading diagonally down across a field and over fields to Okeford Fitzpaine from where we headed up the hill and back to Piddles Wood. The weather was lovely, the views were beautiful and the bluebells were in flower. Finally, along the top of the hill and down the hill, walking past Fiddleford Manor to the Fiddleford Inn for lunch.

The picture shows the Wednesday group in the woods (with bluebells behind

Hilary Smith



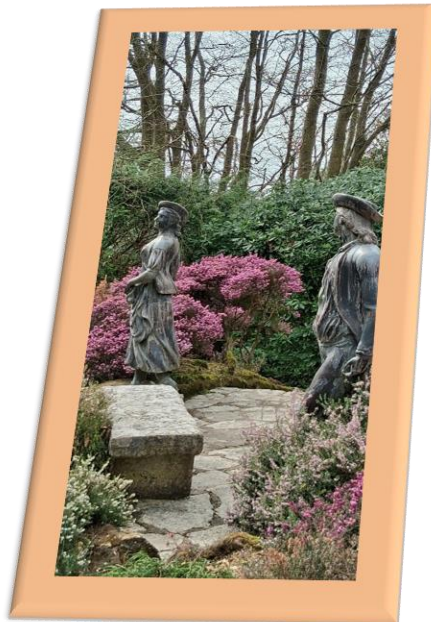
SKITTLES FUN NIGHT

The 28th March saw yet another skittles fun night at the Swan in Stalbridge. 18 members and friends took part on a non-frenzied evening. The competition was fierce as to see who scored the lowest points and prizes awarded. As always, the food was delicious – lamb shanks, baby potatoes, green beans, carrots and baby sweetcorn – yum!



Oddfellows Brass tickets are now available. They can be purchased at the u3a meeting, Williams Florist in Stalbridge, or via email to judy.penfold@oddfellows.co.uk. (the jood58@gmail.com will also do!)

They are £10 each and includes a drink and cake during the interval.



Compton Acres



Future events

(CAN BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

All talks and meetings are held in
Henstridge Village Hall from 2.15pm

July 1st

Michael Malagan

'Can you hear me at the back?'

An amusing story about the funnier side of being a public speaker

September 9th

Open Afternoon

November 4th

Matthew Scott

Being a Fireman



In addition, The Oddfellows
events listed here welcome all
u3a members

29th June - Oddfellows Brass, concert in Stalbridge Hall 3pm (BVu3a have kindly offered to supply cake and beverages in the interval) £10

4th October – Skittles at the Swan, Stalbridge £tba (provisional)

Booking is essential for all Oddfellows events. Please book with Judy jood58@gmail.com



Your Committee

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Walking Group, Wednesday		
Reading Groups	vacant	
Bridge	Howard Warden	Warden444@btinternet.com
Garden Visits	Jan Nast	Janice.nast@gmail.com

GENERAL MEETINGS

Are usually held in Henstridge Village Hall from 2.15pm on the first Tuesday of alternate months.

Members £2.00 Visitors 3.00

All our general meetings are publicised in the online Blackmore Vale magazine, local Facebook pages, websites and magazines. Posters are circulated to public places in Stalbridge, Henstridge, Wincanton, Templecombe and Milborne Port.

Venue hire

Please remember when making bookings that each group is self-funding, therefore, if there are any costs involved, a suitable fee should be charged to attendees to cover these costs. **Also, a copy of the invoice and receipt is required to be sent to the Treasurer each month to be entered into the main accounts.**

Privacy Policy

Please be assured that we will never pass on your details to third parties without explicit consent from you and that we will never share your details with any company or charity for marketing purposes.

The contents of this newsletter are provided by the members for the members and is produced at no cost to the members.